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## Cygnet Theatre Presents Perversely Delightful SHOCKHEADED PETER

*"A vile and repulsive story told by reprehensible characters in a thoroughly degenerate fashion. Absolute Bliss." – David Bowie*

SAN DIEGO, CA – Cygnet's fourteenth season ends with the manic, irreverent and wildly imaginative presentation of the theatrical event, *Shockheaded Peter*. This 1998 musical took a famed German children's book series and turned it into an instant classic. The stage production of *Shockheaded Peter* won rave reviews around the world as one of the most original collaborations of its kind. It featured music by The Tiger Lillies, a three-piece band with a cult following in London, and includes graphic and hilariously sadistic lessons for children about what will happen to them if they don't do as they are told. These cautionary tales for children become lessons for adults in the completely demented stage production.

It's been described as a sinister, steam-punk nightmare; a macabre cabaret; a series of very grim fairy tales; and a hilarious, perverse delight. Actually, it's indescribable, but "absolute bliss" according to David Bowie. The haunting and tantalizing *Shockheaded Peter*, comes to Cygnet Theatre May 18 - June 18. Opening night for Media is **May 27**.

Directed by Associate Artistic Director **Rob Lutfy**, this creative production is sure to astound, terrify and delight audiences. Inspired by gruesome tales from the famous German Children's book, *Struwwelpeter*, or Slovenly Peter, by Heinrich Hoffman, the musical review is essentially, "a series of disturbing images."

"Turning these dark and frightening tales into a staged production is different than anything I've ever done," explained Lutfy. The script, devised in rehearsal by the original cast, is only 23 pages with descriptions often as simple as "the audience is horrified."

"One way to look at it is as *Pans Labyrinth* meets *American Horror Story* at Burning Man," explained Lutfy with a smile. "It's a bit of Brecht, and a bit of Tim Burton! This is a play for the weird ones, those that live on the fringes of society, or for anyone who has ever felt like they don't quite fit into a society of strict rules."

Hoping it becomes "everyone's new favorite obsession," Lutfy pushed his creative team to help find a unified vision for this scary, dark production combining elements of pantomime and puppetry with musical versions of the poems with songs.

"Being a devout horror fan, this was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," said **Michael Mizerany**, who is on board as choreographer. "It uses ideas and concepts of contemporary dance in ways that traditional musical theatre does not. I'm working with Robby to develop the dance as a vital part of the irreverent and dark visual storytelling."

As a visual artist, costumer **Shirley Pierson** is up for the challenge of working collaboratively to shape the tone of the entire production. "You can establish fear and influence the behavior of someone with words, but visually showing fear is clearly more powerful. Many images have helped shape and frame the design language being used. The strongest influences for me have been the picture book itself, German Expressionism, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Tim Burton, *Grand Guignol*, and *Commedia dell'Arte*," said Pierson.

Pierson will employ character costumes, masks, and puppetry (with partial body parts!) with a focus on distortion, scale, gender amalgamation and a controlled color palette. “My design aesthetic for the character costumes, masks, and puppetry has been focused on distortion, scale, gender amalgamation and a controlled color palette. We are exploring several types of puppets: hand, found objects, partial body puppets, multiple headpieces and masks,” she explained.

The spare and slightly askew set is designed by **Jungah Han** and **Sean Fanning**. The plaintive and haunting music, performed live, will be directed by **Patrick Marion**. Choreographer **Michael Mizerany** will create the movement and **Chris Rynne** will design the lights. The task of creating this macabre world filled with bizarre costumes, masks, puppets and more goes to **Shirley Pierson** (Costume Designer) and **Peter Hermann** (Wigs and Makeup Designer). Sound design will be created by **Matt Lescaulut-Wood** and **Dean Remington** will stage manage.

Broadway veteran and Cygnet alumni **Steve Gouveia** (*Little Shop of Horrors*, *Pageant*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) is featured in the challenging role of the Siren. Last seen in *The Rocky Horror Show*, where he played Eddie and Dr. Scott, he was in the original cast of *Jersey Boys* at the La Jolla Playhouse and was recently on stage at The Old Globe in *October Sky*. As a musician, Steve has worked and played with Pete Townshend, among others, and as Siren, he plays over five instruments.

Multi-talented **Sarah Errington**, also featured in *The Rocky Horror Show* as well as *Dogfight*, is the evening’s MC, but certainly not in the traditional sense. Sarah most recently toured with *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* where she flew as Rudolph himself at Madison Square Garden.

**Adrian Alita**, playing the role of Father, was featured in Cygnet’s *When the Rain Stops Falling*, and has appeared in comedy, farce, stunts, puppet and clown shows and is currently serves as the Head of Acting at SDSU. **Kevane La’Marr Coleman** is playing the role of Mother. He is a former member of the Boston Ballet.

In casting the five ensemble members, or minions as they are called, Lutfy looked for three “hyphen” performers. “This show calls for dancers who can act and one more thing.” he explained. Making their Cygnet Theatre debut as the “minions” are **Marc Caro-Willcox**, **Donny Gersonde**, **Danielle Airey**, **Siri Hafso**, and **Isaac Kalimo**.

Performances are May 18 through June 18. Showtimes are Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30pm, Fridays at 8:00pm, Saturdays at 3:00pm and 8:00pm, and Sundays at 2:00pm and 7:00pm.

### **SHOCKHEADED PETER FACT SHEET**

**WHAT:** Cygnet Theatre presents SHOCKHEADED PETER

**WHERE:** Cygnet Theatre

4040 Twiggs St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

**WHO:** Created for the stage by Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott

Adapted from Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter*

Music and Lyrics: The Tiger Lillies

Director: Rob Lutfy

Choreography: Michael Mizerany

Scenic Designer: Designed by Jungah Han and Sean Fanning

Music Director: Patrick Marion°

**Costume and Puppet Designer: Shirley Pierson°**

**Lighting Designer: Chris Rynne°**

**Sound Designer: Matt Lescault-Wood°**

**Prop Designer: Rachel Hengst°**

**Wigs and Makeup: Peter Herman°**

**Stage Manager: Dean Remington \***

**CAST: Danielle Airey (Ensemble)**

**Adrian Alita (Father)**

**Marc Caro-Willcox (Ensemble)**

**Sarah Errington\* (MC)**

**Isaac Kalimo (Ensemble)**

**Donny Gersonde (Ensemble)**

**Steve Gouveia\* (Siren)**

**Siri Hafso (Ensemble)**

**Kevane La'Marr Coleman (Mother)**

**\*Member of Actors Equity Association, °Resident Artist**

**DATES: Previews begin: Friday, May 18**

**Press Opening: Saturday, May 27, 8:00pm**

**Closes: Sunday, June 18**

**Prices start at \$42**

**Performance Schedule**

**Wednesday & Thursday at 7:30pm**

**Friday at 8:00pm**

**Saturday at 3:00pm and 8:00pm**

**Sunday at 2:00pm and 7:00pm**

**CYGNETURE EVENTS:**

**Social Media Night: May 26**

**Out Night, LGBT: May 31**

**Theater on Tap & Friday Forum: June 2**

**Wine Tasting Night: June 8**

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**ABOUT CYGNET THEATRE**

*Cygnnet Theatre Company produces a year-round season of professional Off-Broadway-style theatre as well as thought-provoking and engaging educational programming. Cygnnet is committed to maintaining*

*high standards of artistic and fiscal integrity, and serves more than 40,000 patrons annually from San Diego and beyond. Cygnet performs its mainstage productions at the state-of-the-art theatre in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. An active member of the San Diego community, Cygnet has outreach programs serving tens of thousands of students and community members annually. For more information, visit [www.cygnettheatre.com](http://www.cygnettheatre.com).*

**CYGNET THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT**

*Believing in the power of theatre to startle the soul, stir debate and embrace the wide diversity of the community it serves, Cygnet Theatre Company is fearlessly committed to the dissection, examination and celebration of the human story through the medium of live theatre.*